

NORTH EAST



Change North East England for the better

Manifesto 2019

The North East Party
STANDING UP FOR NORTH EAST ENGLAND

Foreword

The North East Party was founded in May 2014.

We are a progressive, democratic political party which is building from the grass roots in North East England, we are one of many regional parties developing across the UK and the world.

We contest elections at all levels. In 2017 we won the majority of seats on Peterlee Town Council & three seats on Durham County Council. In 2018 we won our first seat on Billingham Town Council and in May 2019 we won a second.

Standing for Parliament is a huge undertaking for a small, new Party. However, even one MP elected to Parliament can have a huge impact when no Party has a majority. In 2015 we fought seats in Newcastle North, Easington, Stockton North and Redcar and Cleveland and lost all four deposits. In 2017 we fought Easington and Susan McDonnell saved her deposit. We will be ready for the next General Election whenever it comes and will be standing candidates throughout the region.



Mark Burdon takes over the role of Chairman from Mary Cartwright, 2019

We have an active structure, meeting regularly at branch and party levels, a monthly executive and an Annual General Meeting. Everybody who shares our commitment to North East England is very welcome to join.

Help us build the North East Party & let's change North East England for the better, for all its people.

Mark Burdon, Leader of the North East Party.

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Our Values

Everybody matters, everybody is important. Everybody is entitled to accurate information, to be able to participate, to have the chance to vote and the opportunity to have their say.

Everybody should have a fair share of the world's resources and an equal opportunity to make what they will of their lives without harming others.

We don't expect the people of North East England to be treated any better than people anywhere else, but we will never accept that they are treated any worse. We will always stand up for the best for North East people and our region.



We encourage people to be ambitious for themselves for their families and communities. We refuse to accept that 'things will always be this way' or 'nothing can be done.' We support local people in demanding ever better standards where they live.

We believe in the principle of subsidiarity, that social and political issues should be dealt with at the most local level that is consistent with their resolution. That's why we support Devolution.

Political Parties can bring people together to campaign coherently and democratically in pursuit of common policies. However, we support independent thought, value conscience and always promote accountability to people over Party.

We enjoy and seek out opportunities for debate. We listen to others and will work together respectfully & openly with others at every opportunity.

We will always campaign with respect, warmth and a sense of humour.

Democratic politics is really important because it's how ordinary people, people like us, can change the world. Politics is about giving people a proper say in the big issues, so that we can all have better lives. Politics is simple and exciting. Those telling you otherwise are just trying to keep you in your place.

We campaign for change.

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Regional Renewal

We want a fair share of prosperity and equal, world class, opportunities for all North East people. We want to live in an enterprising region which plays a positive part in the UK and the World.

One strong voice for the region: We campaign for democratic devolution agreed by a majority of North East people voting in a referendum. We want a 51 member Regional Government, elected by proportional representation with the resources and devolved powers of major government departments. All the relevant policies of Education, Health and Social Care, Employment, Economic Development, Housing, Transport, Planning, Energy will be decided here, in North East England, by elected people.

A fair share of resources: We seek the abolition of the unfair Council Tax. We would replace it with a Land Value Tax of £100 per annum on every acre of England and of 0.5% on the value of every home. Collected nationally and re-distributed to each region on a per capita basis this would return an extra £1.5 billion per annum to be used to benefit people in North East England and to free people and business from other forms of taxation.

World class public services for every Community : We would replace all twelve local authorities and unaccountable NHS boards with a network of directly elected Community Councils equipped with the Select Committee powers to hold local public officials accountable for the delivery of world class, excellent services in every community.

UK Democracy : We would improve Parliament by freeing it up to concentrate on 'reserved powers' in respect of macro- economics, reducing taxation, foreign policy, defence, Immigration and international development. We would seek to replace the House of Lords with a modern revising chamber with elected representatives of every country and region of the UK.

More power & opportunity for North East England under Brexit.

The North East Party supported the principle of holding a referendum on EU membership in our first manifesto ahead of the General Election in 2015.

As a democratic Party we thoroughly respect the result of the Referendum and seek the implementation of Brexit in the best interests of North East England and the U.K. as a whole. We support colleagues from the devolved governments of Scotland & Wales in advocating that all EU powers in respect of devolved functions should be returned to them rather than Westminster. We demand the same rights & resources for the people of North East England as those enjoyed by our fellow U.K. citizens in Scotland & Wales:

Resources previously expended in Europe should be devolved on a per capita basis to North East England and other regions.

Grants previously obtainable from Europe should be transparently included in a properly resourced devolution settlement for North East England.

The powers liberated from Europe in respect of transport, environment, farming, fishing etc. should be returned to an elected North East Regional Government rather than being withheld by Westminster.

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A Thriving Economy

We want a fair share of the prosperity and equal world opportunities for all North East people. We want to live in an enterprising region that makes a positive contribution in the UK and globally.



A Regional Investment Bank and Credit Union: A powerful source of finance for business and a vehicle for savings and affordable loans open to everyone.

A Business Enabling Team : We will commission a Business Enabling Team from the private sector and challenge and licence it to jump-start new economic initiatives.

The priority must be to boost employment and business growth in targeted sectors with financial breaks as well as tailored advice and mentoring in order to support enterprise.

There will be a relentless focus on science and technology and the creation of new businesses, exploiting the region's strong Higher Education base and attracting and retaining able people who are committed to building a prosperous and sustainable North East of England.

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Safe, Vibrant Communities

Too often the London media casts the North East in a bad light. We are proud of our cities, towns and rural communities – and we want to make them the safest places to grow up and live in the UK

Neighbourhood Local Plans : Driven by local people based upon their own priorities for their own communities, with their own budgets to help them on their way. Instead of making everywhere look like everywhere else we can encourage distinction and difference.

North East Armed Forces Covenant : We are very proud of North East people who have served in the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom for so long and with such courage and distinction. We will enact a North East Armed Forces Covenant to enable all retiring members to build successful lives and careers in civilian life. No-one who has served will go unheeded.

A new approach to tackling Crime: Building upon the pioneering work of the former Chief Constable of Durham and a successful approach to drug abuse in Portugal; instead of



criminalising drug users we will refer them to a drug treatment programme. We will make drug addiction a public health issue rather than a criminal matter allowing the police to focus on the criminals who supply illegal drugs and we will seek to reduce drug dependency and deaths from overdoses. We would make cannabis available for pain relief on prescription. Over time we will promote a debate about the legalisation of all drugs in the same way as tobacco and alcohol, removing many criminal opportunities at a stroke and raising money to treat the victims of drug use from taxation.

We will dramatically improve Road Safety : ‘Target Zero’ is a continuous safety initiative for the North East Region. An information and statistics driven system with a goal of Zero Accidents it would seek to create shared spaces the envy of the world with speed limits on residential streets reduced to 20mph.

We will embed a Safer Schools and Neighbourhoods policy: Actively combatting discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexuality, race, religion and differing ability. Countering bullying and encouraging young people to discover and define their own identity in their own way and own time.

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World class public services

All North East people are entitled to integrated public services that offer everyone the opportunity to make the very best of their lives



Empowering People

What if we empowered young people to help run their own care services and schools ? If older people and their families were put in charge of residential care and day-care and home- care perhaps we'd break down barriers and create services that people really need ? Why don't we welcome new people coming to our communities, open our arms to people coming to North East England to learn, to work, to seek refuge from violence and oppression across the world and encourage them to use their skills and build commitment and friendship within their new communities?

Education for Life

We will raise awareness of the importance of good mental health for children, young people and adults : through mental health studies in school curricula, teaching life skills in schools, running a home, shopping on a budget, much greater awareness of the services and support available to promote good mental health and well-being.

A new approach to training young people for real jobs in the real world of work. Where attitudes to punctuality, team work, the acquisition of basic practical skills, high levels of literacy and numeracy are critical and where lifelong learning is the order of the day. Where we train young people not for obsolescence doing the things that machines will increasingly be able to do but for critical roles in science, technology, engineering, in making and developing and fixing things, in nursing, social work, community development, computing, and new creative approaches to leisure, recreation, tourism, healthy lifestyles and sharing skills.

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Rebuilding Our Infrastructure

The North East initiated a transport revolution in the 19th century and transport is the key to our revival in the 21st. We refuse to hang on the coat tails of a Northern Transport Policy focussed on Leeds- Manchester and will develop our own solutions here.

Integrating our regional economy

We will establish a North East Transport Authority with a 'smart card' technology operating across a simple, affordable and integrated public transport system.

We will demand the extension of HS2 to Edinburgh, rather than making do with a link to Leeds. New mainline services for Sunderland, Hartlepool and Stockton.

We will introduce free public transport for all young people under 25 in work, training or education.

We will abolish Air Passenger Duty for North East Airports

On the roads our priorities will be duelling the A1, A69 and A66 and building a new Tees Road Crossing east of Middlesbrough.



Key Railway Investment

We will demand the extension of HS2 to Edinburgh, rather than making do with a link to Leeds. We will call for new mainline services for Sunderland, Hartlepool and Stockton

We will link Tyneside, Wearside and Teesside with a new high speed passenger service via the Stillington Line, the Blyth and Tyne line, Tees Valley Metro and rural lines from Northumberland into Cumbria and off the East Coast Main Line. Extending the Metro using existing lines to Hendon, Grangetown and Ryhope.

Driving Export Growth

We will invest in effective rail freight and road links to Teesport. The ports of Blyth, Newcastle/North Shields, Seaham, Sunderland and Hartlepool will be assisted to develop coastal and North Sea/Baltic links.

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Peterlee

There's no doubt, there has been a lot going on in Peterlee over the last 5 years.....

Taking control of Peterlee Town Council was the first of many political milestones for The North East Party but that certainly didn't mean they could sit back on their laurels. And their activities since, go a long way to show their ongoing commitment to the town.

Evidence of this, if needed, came about with the results of the 2017 local elections, when they not only maintained control of the town council, they also took seats at Shotton and Horden Parish councils and three out of five County Council seats in Peterlee.

Recognising that while we are the opposition at both Horden and Shotton Parish councils, we support our members in those parishes wherever and whenever we can, while continuing to being frustrated with the lack of democracy and transparency where we have no control, particularly at a County level.

But in Peterlee, it's a different story: -

- Council Tax – we continue to reverse a five-year labour high of 34% increase in the town council precept and now see a 0% real term reduction for the last five years. And while surrounding parishes and Durham County Council continue to hike the precepts, we will continue to highlight the inequality of this outdated form of taxation, which penalises those who have the least to give. Horden, Peterlee and Easington, three of the most neglected towns in the County are paying the highest in council tax.
- We continue to be the driving force behind efficiency and savings, whilst delivering more services than ever before.
- Town council members are supporting community groups and organisations who apply to the Neighbourhood Engagement Projects, to the tune of £11,000 a year. And our county council members are supporting residents and community groups through their neighbourhood funding budgets.

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Policy Into Action

- Our continued funding support for the Peterlee Citizens Advice Bureau has seen some amazing results which equate to a return on the initial investment in the region of £67 for every £1 spent; though more importantly, means the people of the town get the best advice available, in particular when it comes to issues with universal credit and benefits advice.
 - And the town is benefitting from year-round activities, including: -
 - The Peterlee Show – which gets bigger and better, year on year.
 - Fireworks – a free event now utilising controversial ‘low noise’ fireworks, saw the highest ever attendance in over 30 years!
 - Fun Days continue in our parks which will also see some investment and benefit from refurbishments and upgrades.
 - Streetgames in collaboration with the community policing team and Groundworks: work together to provide activities for groups of youngsters on a weekly basis and help to reduce anti-social behaviour in and around the town. And it’s been so successful, the police teams are now rolling it out in other surrounding towns and villages.
 - Youth Provision in Peterlee: Providing funding of £20,000 to give two nights of ‘Youthy’ activities for the youngsters in the town. The old youth club was closed down after the labour-controlled county council took the decision to close it. Since it began, it’s well attended and the kids love the relaxed atmosphere where they feel comfortable ‘hanging out’ with friends.
 - And after almost 20 years of lobbying the previous labour run council to erect a fence to make the cricket provision in the town safer and more secure at Helford Road; we were delighted to honour a local gentleman, in renaming the Helford Road Cricket Oval as The Roy Simpson MBE Oval, after the fence was finally erected.
- Anti-social behaviour and vandalism was previously being dealt with on almost a weekly basis at the cricket ground but since the fence was erected, no reports have been received.
- Armed Forces Day – This has been a longstanding day for the Town Council to show respect and gratitude to the brave servicemen and women who have defended our country, many of whom having paid the ultimate price with their lives. Support continues for this poignant event as it grows bigger every year to celebrate our war heroes, past and present.
 - Community Cinema – what a successful project this has been! With many of our members volunteering their own time to run the cinema events, showing anything from Christmas classics and Singalong musicals to Sporting events.
 - Emergency Services Day is now an annual event held in the grounds of Shotton Hall where families can come along and meet teams from our blue light services in the area. Fun and games for all of the family, with displays, information and advice from the people who keep us safe is a great day out -especially when the sun is shining!

Policy Into Action

More Community Groups! A community garden group has set up at Woodhouse Park in the town and working with members of the community, school children and the local police team; they use plants and seedlings which are donated to them by prisoners at Holme House Prison in Stockton to grown plants and vegetables for everyone to use and enjoy. Once again, the police are using this as an exemplar project to replicate in other towns and villages.

- Young Heroes! Launched in 2018, the second celebratory event has been run to recognise young people from the town. From children who help to make meals for the homeless; youngsters who overcome life threatening illness; young heroes helping people involved in accidents; the bullied standing up to support others being bullied and young offenders getting involved with community projects plus many, many more!! Who needs the Oscars when then there is such an uplifting and motivational event happening right here in the town!
- After years of amassing reserves under the previous labour administration, a programme of works will soon be underway to improve and update all of the play parks in the town. The project will see old and outdated equipment being replaced with new, modern and fit for purpose equipment, to encourage more youngsters to enjoy play and activities outside in their local communities.
- Santa's Wish has been running for the last two years and has helped to support families with children and independent adults who had nothing with which to look forward to Christmas. Since the project started in December 2017, hundreds of children and adults have benefitted from the good will of people and businesses in the area, who have donated presents, food and raffle prizes to Santa's Wish.
- Period Poverty support in town council buildings. We have not only introduced free sanitary products in all council buildings, we have promoted our actions to many organisations, including schools in the town, in an attempt to help girls and young women who simply can't afford these essential products.
- We'll be providing a new building for the Thorntree Gill allotments and refurbishing the Lowhills Road allotment buildings very soon. We will continue to replace missing dog poo and grit bins and there is probably so much more we've done that we've simply forgotten about!!
- And watch this space for some news about a community project we have on the drawing board for the Acre Rigg area in the town – exciting times ahead!

We'd like to remind you once again; The North East Party was only formed five years ago - think about how much more we can do in the years to come!

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Policy Into Action

Billingham

Mark Burdon and Jennifer Shotton were elected to Billingham Town Council. Mark was re-elected to the seat he won in 2018.

Mark and Jennifer will support or reject proposals based on whether they will benefit Billingham North, rather than based on party political arguments. Their priority is to make the town a safer, healthier place to live, with quality public services accessible to everyone.

The North East Party aims to build our representation over the next four years time as vacancies emerge, and extend our influence by working with like-minded independent Councillors and across parties. We want an effective town council to serve the town.

Every year since Billingham Town Council was set up in 2007, most Councillors have voted to increase the town council precept. We don't believe putting taxes up even further is necessary or what the people of Billingham want. Instead, we would want the council to work within the budget it already receives (over a quarter of a million pounds per year) and consult the public regularly on its priorities.

A North East Party run council would go beyond the legal minimum levels of openness and transparency by introducing more opportunities for public dialogue with Councillors, making financial information more accessible year round, and sharing draft budgets with the public for feedback.

We are also interested in exploring new ways that the council's resources could be used to help local community groups. Many successful charities and other groups could benefit from use of John Whitehead Park, the Community Hub and the Library. We will support efforts to make Billingham a Dementia Friendly town.



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